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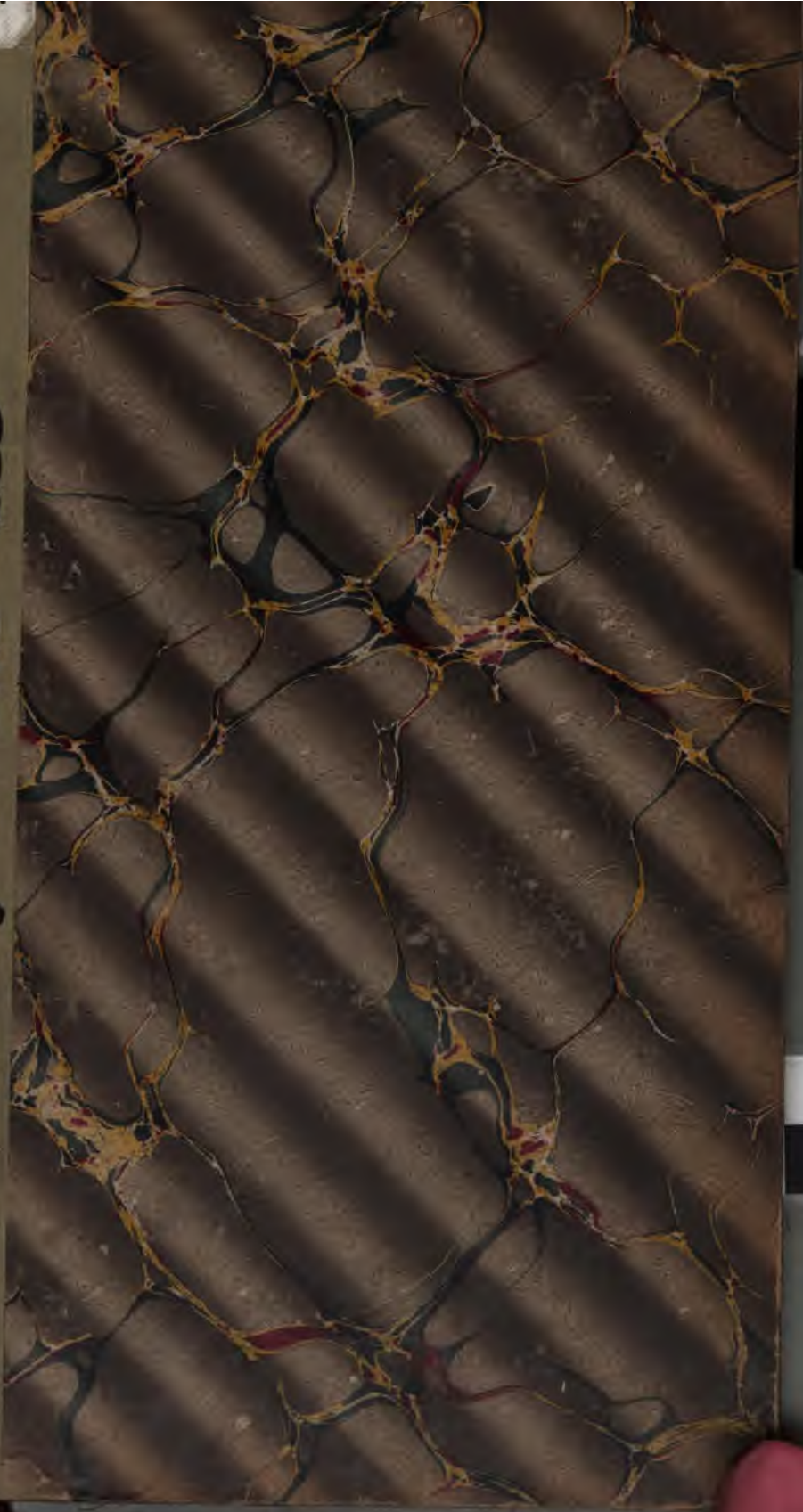
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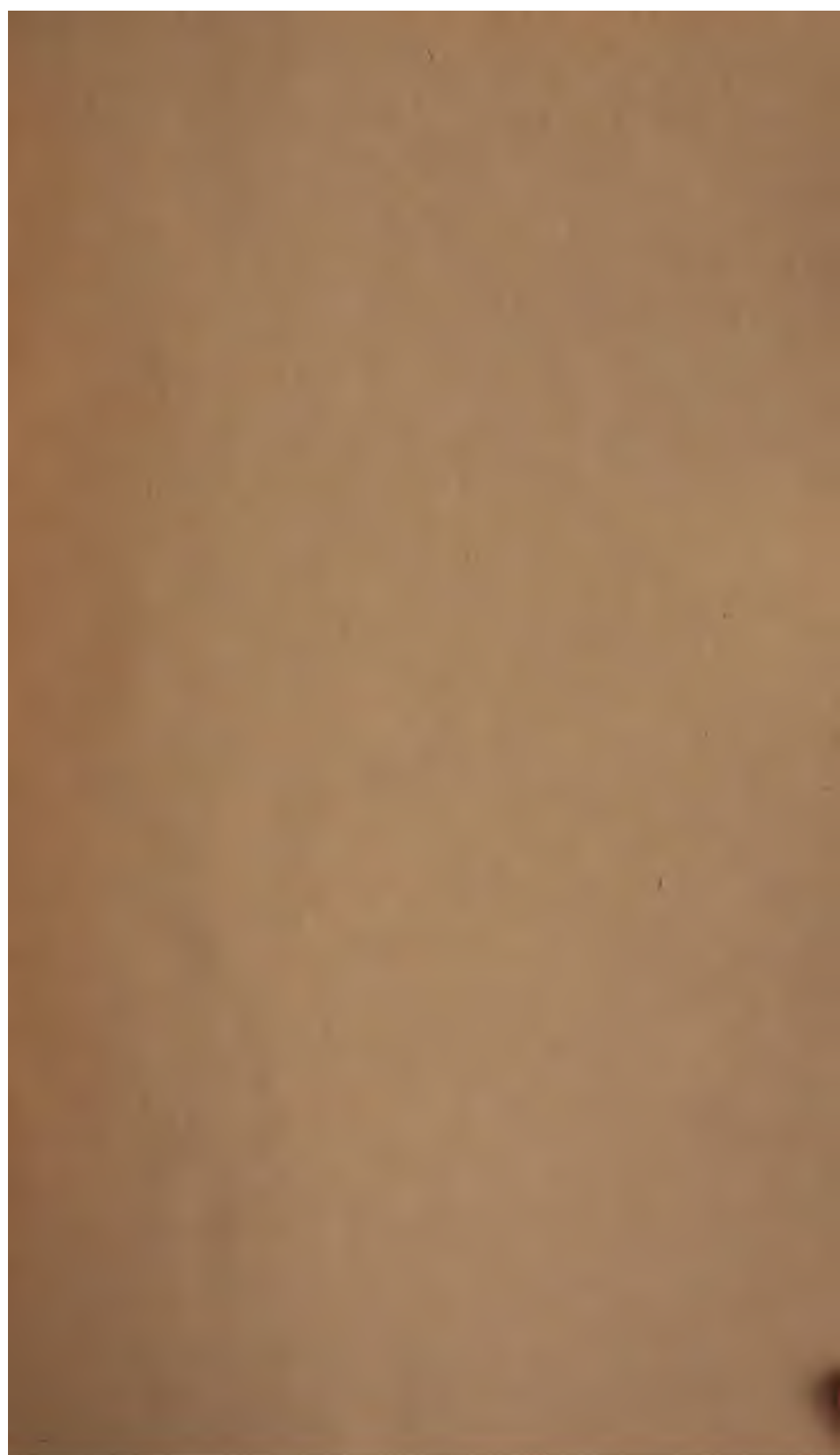


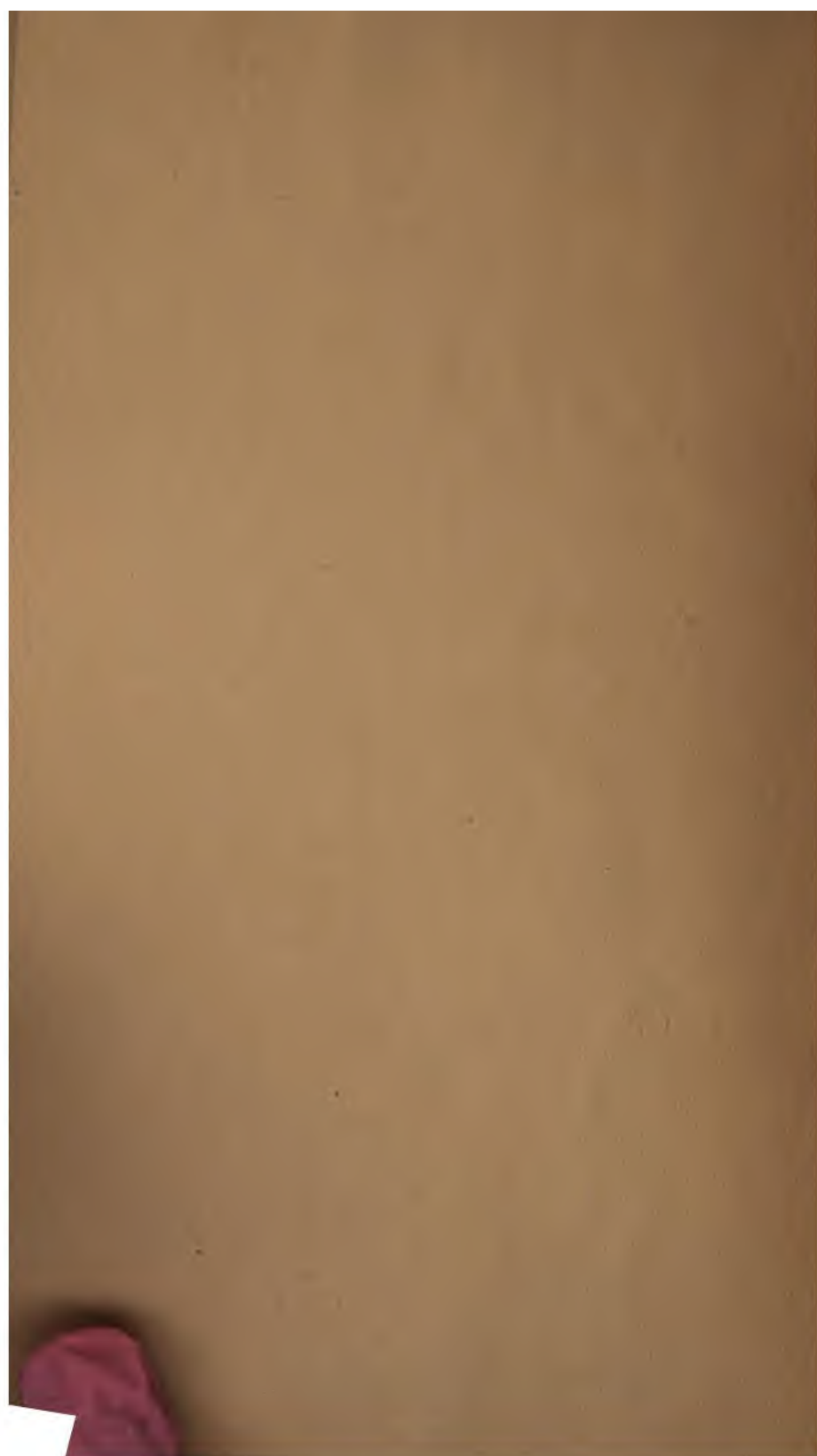
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# **A BRIEF REVIEW**

**OF THE**

**CAUSES AND COURSE OF THE DIVISION**

**IN THE**

**Yearly Meeting of Ohio,**

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**BY ENOCH LEWIS,**

**EDITOR OF FRIENDS' REVIEW, PHILADELPHIA.**

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## A BRIEF REVIEW

*Of the Causes and Course of the Division in the Yearly Meeting of Ohio.*

As the difficulties in Ohio have an intimate connection with some of the proceedings within the Yearly Meeting of New England, a concise notice of some of those proceedings may compose a proper introduction to this Review.

In the early part of 1843, John Wilbur, a minister in the Society of Friends, was disowned by Greenwich Monthly Meeting, a branch of Rhode Island Quarter.

The charge, in substance, was that he had indulged a spirit of detraction, manifested by giving circulation, in various ways, to charges by which the character of the Society was impeached and the religious standing of divers Friends, in their own and other Yearly Meetings, much misrepresented. While under treatment on this account, he endeavored to vindicate the course he was taking, by the alleged unsoundness of some of the published writings of a Friend from England who had recently paid a religious visit to this country; but Friends uniformly maintained that the question of doctrines, or the writings alluded to, had no relation to the subject of complaint, that complaint depending upon a violation of gospel order. John Wilbur appealing to Rhode Island Quarter from the judgment of the monthly meeting, and that judgment being there confirmed, carried the case by appeal to the Yearly Meeting, where it came under examination in the 9th month, 1844. The committee, twenty-one in number, to whom the subject was referred, brought in a report signed by all except one, expressing their conclusion that the judgment ought to be confirmed; which report was accepted by the Yearly Meeting, and the judgment was accordingly confirmed, without a dissenting voice.

Here, we may observe, the remedies provided by the discipline against unjust or improper disownments were fully tried and exhausted. No appeal lies to any other department of Society.



This Yearly Meeting of 1844, which confirmed the disownment of John Wilbur, addressed epistles as usual to the other Yearly Meetings, and these epistles were read in them and responded to as in former years.\*

When the Yearly Meeting of New England convened, on the 16th of 6th month, 1845, the representatives from the eight quarters being called as usual, all except three answered to their names. But at that stage of the proceedings, a second paper, purporting to be a report from Rhode Island Quarter, addressed to "New England Yearly Meeting of Friends," was laid on the table. The names of the persons thus given as representatives, were entered on the minutes and called, when they appeared to be all present.

"A proposition was then made, and united with by the meeting, that the Representatives from the other seven Quarterly Meetings, those named in the two accounts from Rhode Island being excluded, should constitute a Committee, before whom the persons claiming to be the Representatives from that Quarterly Meeting should be fully heard on the subject of their claims respectively; and that the Committee, after deliberating thereon, should report to the Yearly Meeting which of the two bodies thus claiming, was, in their judgment, the true Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, in unity with and subordinate to that meeting, and entitled to send Representatives thereto.

"This subject having been thus far disposed of, the Meeting came to the conclusion that no other business could with propriety be entered upon by the Yearly Meeting till it was fully determined; and instead of proceeding to the appointment of Clerks on 2nd day afternoon, as usual, decided that the Clerks then under appointment should continue to serve the meeting until the question was settled.

"Two accounts purporting to be from Rhode Island Quarter were also presented to the Women's Yearly Meeting, and the whole subject was similarly disposed of by that Meeting, by referring it to all the Representatives, except those from Rhode Island, to report thereon.

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\* In the answer from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, held in the 4th month, 1845, the epistle from New England was acknowledged as *acceptable*; and although it was proposed in the Yearly Meeting to expunge the expression, the proposal was rejected and the word *acceptable* retained.

"Soon after the opening of the afternoon sitting, a person under appointment as one of the Representatives from Sandwich Quarter, rose and said, that a portion of the Representatives had been together, and concluded to propose the name of Thomas B. Gould\* for Clerk, and Charles Perry for Assistant Clerk. Upon this, several individuals rose in quick succession, and expressed unity with the nomination. The large body of the Representatives informed the Meeting, that they had no knowledge that any such proposition was about to be made, and by a very general expression of the members of the Meeting, as well as of the Representatives, the course proposed was wholly disapproved. On calling the names of *all* the Representatives in attendance from the several Quarterly Meetings, except Rhode Island, it appeared by their express declaration, that *forty-one* of their number were not consulted in relation to the appointment of Clerks, and that they now entirely dissented from the appointment of Thomas B. Gould and Charles Perry, while *four* made no response when their names were called; *forty-five* being the whole number in attendance, with the exception of those named in the accounts from Rhode Island. But the persons thus nominated to act as Clerks, with others, their adherents, proceeded in reading and speaking, to the disturbance of the meeting. The Clerk of the Yearly Meeting, by its fully expressed direction, solemnly protested against their proceedings, and desired them to desist. To this, however, they paid but little attention, and continued to carry on their own business till the adjournment of the meeting. Similar proceedings took place in the Women's Meeting, with the exception that the Seceders left the house before the meeting adjourned.

"On third day morning, the 17th, the committee in the case of Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, made a report, in which, after giving a statement of the various circumstances connected with the subject referred to their consideration, they expressed their united sense and judgment, that the accounts from Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, signed by David Buffum and Sarah F. Tobey, as Clerks, should be received as the true accounts from said Quarterly Meeting, and that the representatives therein named should be considered and acknowledged as the representatives

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\* It appears that the person thus offered as Clerk had been disowned about seven months before.

from that Quarterly Meeting to the Yearly Meeting.' This report was signed by forty-one men, and thirty-eight women, being all the representatives in attendance in the Men's Meeting, except four, and all in the Women's Meeting, except two, apart from the Representatives named in the two accounts from Rhode Island. After the Report was read, two friends were appointed to inform the representatives named in the account signed by Charles Perry, Assistant Clerk, that the Committee to whom their claims were referred, had made a report, which was about to be considered, and that they might be heard thereon. After a short absence, one of the friends reported that he had delivered the message intrusted to them, to a number of those persons named in the report, whom they found assembled in the yard, in company with others. Having waited a sufficient time, the meeting after hearing the report a second time, by a very general expression confirmed its conclusions, and thus acknowledged the meeting, of which the accounts were signed by David Buffum and Sarah F. Tobey, as Clerks, to be the true Quarterly Meeting of Rhode Island, and the Representatives named therein, to be the Representatives from Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting to this Yearly Meeting."\*

From this plain statement of facts, two conclusions evidently follow: 1st. That the question of doctrines had no part in producing the separation in New England. For the subject of doctrines was not brought under discussion during their proceedings, either in the disownment of John Wilbur, or in the subsequent action of their meetings. 2. That the circumstances under which the body whereof Thomas B. Gould has always acted as clerk was organized, and the mode of its organization, afford it no rational claim to the character of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends.

It is not denied by any that the meeting which convened at Newport on the 16th of 6th month, 1845, was the genuine undisputed Yearly Meeting of New England; and that this meeting has maintained its regular functions from that time to the present. No act or omission of that meeting has been adduced on which its suspension or dissolution can be predicated. The argument of

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\* Narrative of facts, &c., signed by Abraham Shearman, Jr., and Hannah Gould, Jr., as Clerks, 1845.

Judge Ewing in the Camden trial is therefore applicable to this case.

“One meeting being in life, another of the same powers, rights, and jurisdiction, could not, according to the discipline of the society, according to the simplest elements of reason, according to the immutable rules of action, which must govern and control all human assemblages, of whatever nature, and whether religious or civil, according, indeed, to the avowed doctrines of the pleadings in this cause, and the consentaneous declarations of counsel, a second, a subsequent meeting could not be set up within its bounds.”

In the trial of a cause arising out of this unhappy division, Chief Justice Shaw in delivering the opinion of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, after reciting the transactions in the Yearly Meeting on the 16th of 6th month, 1845, in a manner corresponding in substance with the account above given, proceeds :

“It appears to us very clear, upon the evidence, that though this action was made the occasion of holding a separate meeting under Gould, yet that, as a legitimate Yearly Meeting, it was altogether irregular and void. Gould’s own minute seems quite conclusive. Giving an account of this meeting, after a long recital of grievances, oppression, heresy and misconduct, on the part of leading men, he states that it was regularly formed under Shearman as Clerk; that the question, as to which set were the true representatives, was referred to the other representatives, and states the reasons why those coming from the Wilbur meeting declined so to submit the question, and proceeds to state, that in the afternoon, Prince Gardner, on behalf of the representatives from Rhode Island Quarterly Meeting, and some of those from Sandwich Quarterly Meeting, reported that they had been together, and were united in proposing the name of Thomas B. Gould for clerk of this meeting for the ensuing year, and of Charles Perry for assistant clerk; and the nominations being fully united with, *by those who have been for some years laboring under much oppression, for the support of the order and discipline and of the testimonies and doctrines of our religious society upon their original foundation*, they were accordingly appointed.

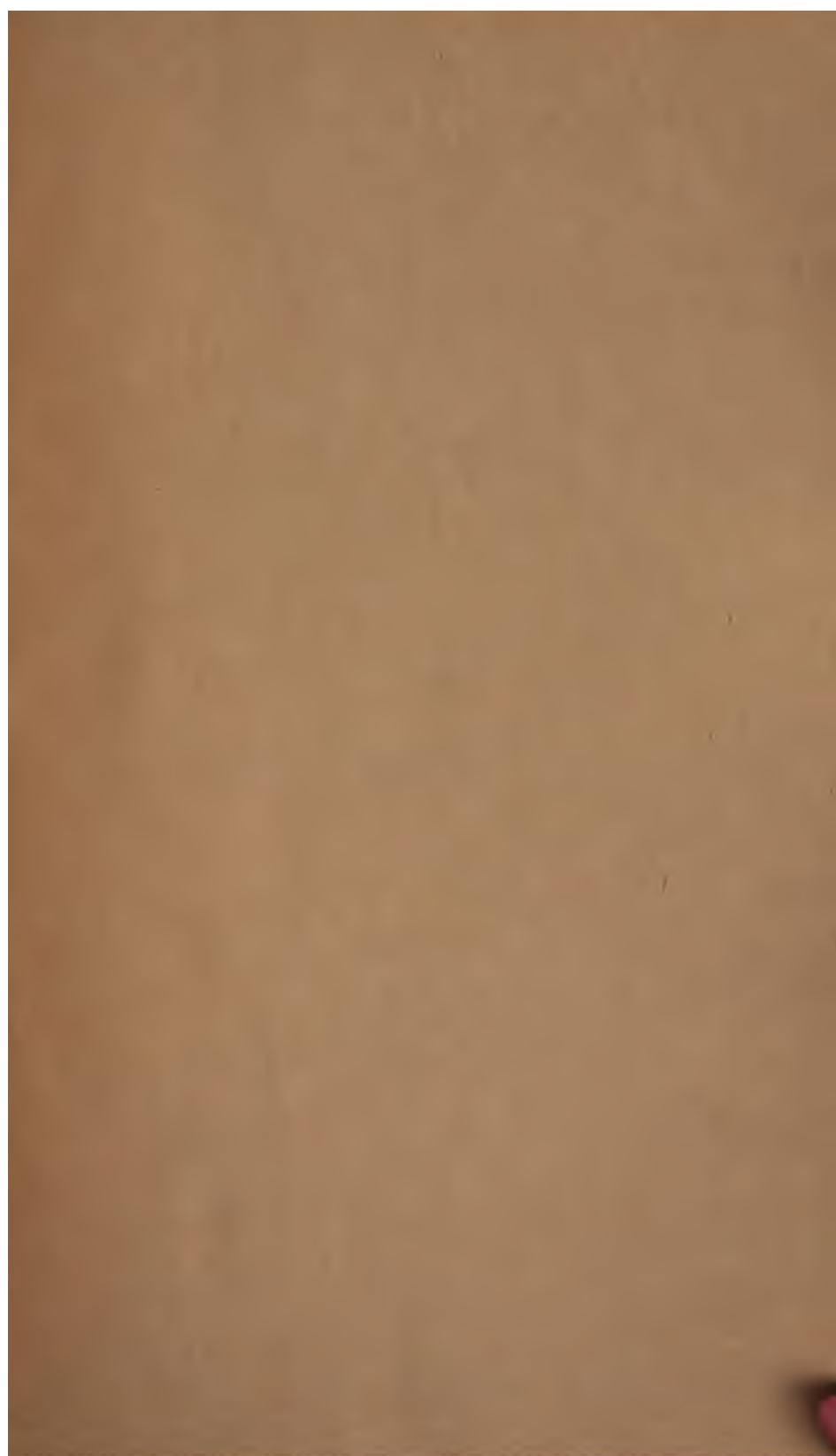
“This was the basis of the secession, and of an attempt to organize a separate Yearly Meeting. The only apology for offering

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lodged in any department of the society. The conclusion is, therefore, inevitable, that the disownments authorized or confirmed by New England Yearly Meeting, whether right or wrong, are conclusive. In regard to the decision of a Yearly Meeting, Chief Justice Shaw remarks :

"It is final and conclusive, because there is no superior body which can call its decisions in question. It is conclusive, in the sense in which the judgments of the highest courts are conclusive, not because they are necessarily wiser or better than those of other courts, but because it is the tribunal of last resort, and the constitution and laws have created no tribunal to re-examine its decisions."

From the testimony on all sides, it is too obvious for doubt or denial, that the whole difficulty arose, on the one side, from the conduct of John Wilbur, and on the other, from the efforts made by Friends in New England to maintain what they considered to be the order and discipline in his case. It is also obvious that he had tried and exhausted the remedies provided by discipline for securing the rights of members. Whether the proceedings in the inferior meetings were conformable to their own discipline or not, was a question to be decided, in the last resort, by the Yearly Meeting. It was so decided, and the disownment of John Wilbur was confirmed. And being thus confirmed, it is believed that the interference of other Yearly Meetings with their conclusions, is not supported by any disciplinary precedent in the Society of Friends. On this subject the associated committees of the five Yearly Meetings, who convened at Baltimore in the 7th month, 1849, remark :

"Resting in the unchangeable truth of the Gospel, our worthy forefathers, under the enlightening influence of Divine grace, early saw the necessity of that organization of meetings, and the establishment of that Christian discipline, which are essential to our preservation and prosperity ; and very full, solemn and forcible is the language of that devoted servant of Christ, George Fox, when he refers to the setting up of meetings for discipline, and the authority in which they should be held. 'They were set up by the Spirit and power of the Lord God,' 'and the power of the Lord God is the authority of your men's and women's meetings.' And, however high and holy may be the profession which this necessarily involves, experience has always verified the truth, that it

has been as they are thus held, that they have fulfilled the purposes of their establishment. In the organization of these meetings a beautiful order was introduced, consistent with the simplicity and authority of the unchangeable truth, an order which has proved eminently salutary and efficient in the Church. Yearly, Quarterly, Monthly and Preparative Meetings, were set up and are still continued, for the purpose of Church government, subordinate and accountable one unto another; Preparative to Monthly, Monthly to Quarterly, and Quarterly to the Yearly Meeting. The last being the highest tribunal in this Church organization, from whose decisions there is no appeal, and exercising over all below it a power of supervision and control, looking to the good of the members composing them, and to the honor of truth; and in all cases where it deems it necessary, directing their proceedings in the authority which the truth gives."

"This subordination and order remain to be essential to our preservation and cannot be departed from. Any innovation must necessarily lead to weakness and confusion, and the cause of truth must suffer from it. As introduced and practised by our ancestors, they are simple and effective, for they are founded in the truth, and derive their authority therefrom. Nor can their exercise in this authority ever prove oppressive to meetings or individuals, but strengthening and preserving."

"This Conference is united in the belief, that it is essential for us clearly to understand and inviolably to sustain the rights that belong to distinct Yearly Meetings. It cannot be questioned that if a Yearly Meeting should manifest unsoundness in Christian faith, if it should promulgate views inconsistent with the principles professed by friends, or should not maintain our Christian testimonies, that it may then become the duty of the other Yearly Meetings to extend to it brotherly entreaty or admonition for its restoration. But in the exercise of the functions which legitimately and exclusively belong to itself, as the forming or administering its own discipline, any interference by another Yearly Meeting, or attempt to control its action in these respects, would be an infraction of our established order, and fraught with consequences perilous to the whole brotherhood of Yearly Meetings; against which we feel solemnly bound to bear testimony."

And again, in the address of this Conference in 1851, they remark: "It is not for us to enter into a review of the disciplinary



proceedings of New England Yearly Meeting ; they belong exclusively to itself, and have not been called in question by the meetings we represent, nor by those of London and Ireland."

The seceding body, assuming the title of New England Yearly Meeting, addressed epistles to the Yearly Meetings in Europe and America, but their communications were not received or responded to in any of the meetings to which they were addressed ; and the Yearly Meetings of London, Dublin, New York, Baltimore, North Carolina and Indiana, explicitly disavowed any connexion with the seceding body, and directed their clerks to return the addresses to the quarter from which they came.

In the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia, the correspondence with the Yearly Meeting of New England was suspended in the year 1846 ; the suspension being apparently founded, not on any doubt of the continued existence of that meeting, nor on any official or authorized charge of maladministration, or unsoundness of doctrine, but on the circumstance that a small number of the members of that meeting had separated from the body, and organized a meeting, which assumed the name of New England Yearly Meeting and addressed an epistle to us.

Into the wisdom or propriety of this suspension it is not now our intention to inquire. This suspension consisted in declining to read or respond to the epistle received from the regularly constituted Yearly Meeting ; yet when any members of that meeting attended Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, their right to seats therein has not been called in question. But when such friends have attended with minutes or certificates, those documents have not been read in the Yearly Meeting. By what authority they have been arrested and withheld, is perhaps more easily asked than answered. The Yearly Meeting has not repealed or suspended the rule of discipline which requires the certificates or minutes of friends attending ours from other Yearly Meetings to be read therein.

In the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia, in the year 1848, the subject of the difficulties in New England was referred to the Meeting for Sufferings, and that body in the following year, presented to the Yearly Meeting a detailed report of the facts and circumstances which were adjudged by those who supported it, to have produced the difficulties in New England Yearly Meeting.

When this report was read in the Yearly Meeting of 1849 it plainly appeared that a large number of experienced and valuable Friends, both members of the Meeting for Sufferings and others, dissented from it. It was, however, passed through the meeting, though certainly not with the union and cordiality of feeling and judgment which are usually considered essential to the adoption of a measure of such vital importance; and was directed to be forwarded to the two bodies in New England, but without addressing either of them as the Yearly Meeting.

Previous to the production of this report, it may be remembered that Friends in New England had been frequently charged with unsoundness of doctrine, and many well-meaning Friends, no doubt, fully believed that the difficulties there arose from the adoption, by many of the leading members, of sentiments on doctrinal subjects, inconsistent with the faith and principles of our religious Society. It is also to be remembered that the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia had then, for three years, suspended its long established correspondence with the Yearly Meeting of New England. It would therefore be more than can be reasonably looked for from men encompassed with the usual infirmities of our nature, to expect the Committee of the Meeting for Sufferings, professedly acting on behalf of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, to feel entirely clear of an inclination to find, if they could, an adequate reason for the suspension in question; and the charge of unsoundness, if fairly established, would have furnished a plausible if not conclusive justification.

Indeed, from the course pursued by Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and the prominence given to the imputation that the difficulties in New England were the result of unsoundness of doctrine adopted by Friends there, the Committee appointed for the express purpose of tracing to their source and exposing to light, the origin and progress of those difficulties, could not perform the duty assigned to them without adducing a proof of that unsoundness, if proof of it could be adduced.

Yet notwithstanding these obvious considerations, nothing in the report even attempts to fix such a charge upon them. Their disciplinary proceedings are indeed reviewed, and in several instances pronounced incorrect, but this does not in any degree involve the question of doctrines.

Considering an attempt by one Yearly Meeting or by any of

its branches, to review and re-judge the disciplinary proceedings of another Yearly Meeting, as altogether extra-judicial, and unauthorized by the nature and principles of their relation, we shall offer no opinion in regard to the correctness of the review in question.

As no charge in relation to doctrines appears, we are furnished with negative evidence that the committee had none to adduce; and negative is in this case as satisfactory as positive. We have, however, something more than negative evidence in the case. For when the belief is expressed that harmony cannot be restored until the disciplinary proceedings, which had just been pronounced incorrect, are retracted or redressed, it is plainly intimated that harmony might be restored by the correction or retraction of those proceedings. But certainly a controversy arising from the promulgation or maintenance of unsound doctrines could not be adjusted and harmony restored, by any thing less than the removal of the cause from which the controversy arose. A mere correction of disciplinary measures would rectify no errors, and reconcile no contrarieties in relation to doctrines.

It is also to be observed—and the observation is important—that all the proceedings which are thus pronounced inconsistent with the discipline, arose, directly or indirectly, from John Wilbur's case. John Wilbur appears as the moving cause in this distressing affair. But the question whether John Wilbur's right of membership was unjustly invaded, had been adjudged, and the proceedings of the inferior meetings in his case confirmed by the highest tribunal having cognizance of the subject; and John Wilbur himself was candid enough to acknowledge that he had been fully and kindly heard by the Yearly Meeting's Committee.

A few remarks may here be offered relative to the claims of John Wilbur, Thomas B. Gould, and their associates, to the character of members of our religious society. It will hardly be maintained that they are members of the Yearly Meeting which has disowned them, or from which they have voluntarily withdrawn. If they are members at all, they must be members of what is sometimes called the smaller body, for they neither claim to be, nor are owned as members of any other body in New England. The question then arises, whether that body is a Yearly Meeting of Friends, so constituted and organized as to entitle its members to the rights of membership wherever they may choose to travel.

If we answer this question affirmatively, we adopt a conclusion which no Yearly Meeting\* in the world has admitted, and which all except two have explicitly disavowed. If we answer negatively, we can hardly escape the conclusion that members of that body, when they take seats in other yearly Meetings, must be regarded as intruders.

That the question must be answered negatively appears by several considerations. All the Yearly Meetings which have answered at all have answered negatively. The report of the Meeting for Sufferings to Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, plainly admits that this smaller body "was not a regularly constituted Yearly Meeting." Nor does it maintain that the ancient Yearly Meeting of New England, of which Abraham Shearman, Jr., was clerk, was dissolved, or its functions suspended, at the time when the new organization was formed. In fact, its continued *existence* is necessarily implied when its retraction of certain disciplinary proceedings is stated as the condition on which unity is to be restored. Hence, the decision of Judge Ewing, already quoted, in reference to the Camden case, becomes applicable to this; and as Friends admitted the correctness of that decision at the time it was pronounced, it is presumable they will not question its validity in the present day.

If now we turn our attention to our friends in Ohio, and inquire into the causes which produced the opposition in feeling and sentiment, so sorrowfully prevalent there, we find them originating in the New England difficulties. The secession from the Yearly Meeting of New England occurred in the 6th month, 1845, and at the ensuing Yearly Meeting of Ohio a painful opposition of judgment and feeling became obvious. Two epistles, both purporting to be from the Yearly Meeting of New England, were announced, but neither of them was acknowledged or responded to. From that time to the period of the late separation there, the reception of the epistles from the ancient Yearly Meeting in New England, and

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\* It is true, that when, in 1852, John Wilbur openly attended the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia, and his attendance was objected to, his right to a seat there was attempted to be vindicated by the allegation that he was unquestionably a member, but no explanation was given or attempted of the process by which he was supposed to have been restored to membership after his disownment was confirmed by New England Yearly Meeting. The case was too hastily passed over to be regarded as the expression of a judgment, more particularly as the decision of so important a question as the establishment of a Yearly Meeting.

the usual expression of unity with the members in attendance from that meeting, have been subjects of controversy between the parties into which the meeting was obviously divided. For several years the minutes and certificates of Friends from New England were read and recorded in the meeting of ministers and elders as in former years; but in the public Yearly Meeting such record was not made. In the women's Yearly Meeting, the ancient practice has been steadily maintained in relation to the epistles (except in 1845, when no epistles to any of the Yearly Meetings were issued) and to the minutes of Friends from other Yearly Meetings. In 1846, a communication from the "smaller body" was presented to that meeting, and after examination by a committee, was returned to the body that issued it, accompanied by an explicit minute declining all correspondence with them.

Another subject of controversy soon arose among Friends of Ohio. Some members of the "smaller body" in New England, who had voluntarily separated from the regular Yearly Meeting, or had been disowned, at times appeared and took their seats as members of the Yearly Meeting. Their presence was objected to by one class, and openly allowed, or even actively encouraged, by another. In the course of these discussions, it was urged by some of those who advocated the attendance of that description of persons, that as *they* had not objected to the presence of members of the "larger body" in New England, such Friends as dissented from them ought to be equally tolerant in relation to the attendance of members of the "smaller body." This, as already observed, involved the question of the legitimacy of the "smaller body" as a Yearly Meeting of Friends, and the concession proposed amounted virtually to an admission that the claims of the two bodies to the character of Yearly Meetings were equal; and some of those who sympathized with the "smaller body," did actually claim that the two bodies stood on equal ground. To this the Friends who desired to maintain the usual and long established relation with that Yearly Meeting could not agree. For as they had always regarded the "smaller body," as seceders, and not as a Yearly Meeting, they could not consistently admit them to seats in their meeting.

Hence, we are brought to the conclusion, and it appears impossible to arrive at a contrary one, that so far as the difficulties in the late Yearly Meeting of Ohio arose from the claims of Thos.

B. Gould and others similarly circumstanced, to a seat in that meeting, and the effort on one side to support that claim, and on the other to reject it, the order and discipline of the Society were clearly on the side of those who insisted on their exclusion. For we are to observe that the usage and order which require our meetings for discipline to be select, were not denied. The question at issue was not whether the meeting ought to be select, but whether it was so while Thomas B. Gould and his companion were present. But the decision of this question necessarily depended upon the previous one, whether the "smaller body" in New England was a Yearly Meeting of Friends. The affirmative decision of one of these questions, was, in reality, a similar decision of the other. The discipline recognizes no partial rights of membership. Every individual must be either within or without the pale of our religious society.

From these difficulties arose another respecting the choice of a clerk. Previously to the secession in New England, we hear nothing of any controversy on this subject; but when the dissensions in New England had spread their influence among Friends in Ohio, the choice of a clerk became an object of no ordinary interest. As the friends who were opposed to the new organization, and desirous to maintain the ancient connection, generally believed that Benjamin Hoyle, the clerk, had manifested his partiality towards the seceders, they were desirous of releasing him, and filling his place with one who would willingly promote the restoration of the ancient order and fellowship. Hence, we soon find it reported that the representatives could not agree upon a clerk or assistant. In this dilemma the former incumbents were continued in office.

Here we can hardly fail to perceive, that all the embarrassments in regard to proceeding with business,—four days, in one instance, being spent in debating the question whether their business should proceed while persons disowned in New England were present,—and all the difficulty in agreeing upon a clerk, arose from the opposite sentiments entertained among them respecting the New England secession. Friends in Ohio were not disputing about doctrines. If the subject of doctrines was at any time brought into the discussion, it was not admitted by Friends as the original ground of controversy, but merely as auxiliary to the cause in dispute. To whatever part of this unhappy contest we

direct our attention, if we trace it to its source, we still are led back to the secession in New England.

The reader may perhaps inquire, what, after all, is the specific point of controversy? The object which one class of Friends have in view is easily explained. They regard those, by some styled the "larger body," as the genuine, long established Yearly Meeting of New England, and desire to extend to it and to its members the usual expression of unity and Christian fellowship. And they of course consider the "smaller body" as seceders, who have forfeited or relinquished their connection with the Society of Friends, and consequently neither own them as members, nor can hold church fellowship with them. The position of those who espouse the opposite side of the question, is not so easily defined. Though they have not so far denied to the members of the "larger body" the rights of membership as to refuse them a seat in meetings for discipline, yet they have refused to read the epistles and certificates addressed to them from that Yearly Meeting. They have also admitted and encouraged the attendance, both in meetings of ministers and elders, and in meetings for discipline, of persons whose claim to membership rested entirely upon the authority of the seceding body in New England; and although they have not officially recognized that body as a Yearly Meeting of Friends, it is difficult if not impossible to perceive in what manner the measures they have already adopted can be consistently carried out without a full and unqualified recognition of that body. The countenance shown to Thomas B. Gould, in his character of a professed member and minister of the Society of Friends, at the late Yearly Meeting of Ohio, and subsequently by active and conspicuous members of the party, can be defended on no other ground than the admission that the body for which he has for some years acted as clerk is to be regarded as a legitimate Yearly Meeting of Friends.

The practical question at issue, whatever form may be given to it in theory, then appears to be, whether a connection and church fellowship shall be maintained with the ancient Yearly Meeting of New England, and consequently with the Yearly Meetings in Europe and America that sustain their union with it, or whether a union shall be established with the "smaller body" in New England, and an eventual disruption effected from all the Yearly Meetings which have declined its fellowship.

It may now be seasonable to inquire more particularly into the respective claims, to the character of Ohio Yearly Meeting of Friends, of the two bodies claiming that title, into which that meeting has been recently divided.

A few facts bearing on the question, and admitting of no denial, may be adduced. The Friends who advocated the appointment of Jonathan Binns, have always insisted, and continue to insist on the full recognition of what is often termed the larger body in New England, as the genuine Yearly Meeting, and upon extending to that meeting and to its members the usual evidence of unity and church fellowship. They have also insisted upon withholding a correspondent evidence of unity and church fellowship from the body of which Thomas B. Gould is clerk, and from the members of that body. In this they are clearly endeavoring to carry out practically, in Ohio, the course adopted, and the judgment pronounced by all the other Yearly Meetings in the world except one. From contrariety of judgment and feeling on this subject, and not from disputes about doctrines, the difficulties in Ohio arose.

For several years the representatives failed to agree upon a clerk, and so reported to the Yearly Meeting, and that meeting re-appointed the clerk of the previous year. That this course, when adopted by the general concurrence of the Yearly Meeting, was in order, admits of no doubt. But that this was the only course which the meeting, in such an emergency, had authority to take, is not so clear. The representatives having failed to perform the duty assigned them, the appointment of the clerk devolved on the meeting, as though the subject had not been referred. The only precedents were those set by themselves, and a solitary instance, under unusual excitement, in Philadelphia. And if the Yearly Meeting of Ohio could establish a precedent, it could also change it. Surely no correct disciplinarian will assert that a Yearly Meeting is bound by principle or precedent to continue a clerk in his office, though he may have lost the unity and confidence of the meeting, as long as partisans can be thrown into the representation, who will prevent the agreement of that body upon another individual.

But could we even agree that the meeting was bound by precedent to continue the incumbent in office whenever the representatives presented an united report that they had no name to offer,



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but they could not agree upon a name? a divided report could be given. In such a situation, one class of voters should give in the name of their candidate fully and legibly, and the other should leave the place for the name and let it be any doubt, whatever might be the result, that the candidate named was duly elected. This case is analogous, as far as the representation is concerned, with the case before us. A part of their voters proposed certain persons, and reported them to the meeting; the other part made a blank report. When the meeting opened in the meeting, Jonathan Binns and Benjamin Hoyle were the only names before the meeting; for the names of Benjamin Hoyle and Wm. S. Bates were not heard till after the minute announcing their continuance. Therefore, the only one proposed to the meeting, and the case falls under that stated by Judge Ames, quoting Angel and Ames: "When a majority is in favor of the appointment of a candidate, and do not propose any other candidate, the minority may elect the candidate named." [p. 29.] With, however, this important exception, nothing appears to show that those who advocated the appointment of Jonathan Binns were a minority. In fact, those in favor of that appointment were quite as numerically heard on such occasions, and the opposition was the one.

Benjamin Hoyle and Wm. S. Bates were not proposed by any one in the meeting, and no discussion of them preceded the reading of the minute of their election. The precedents on which that continuance was based, were cases essentially different from the one before us. It appears quite vain to insist that Benjamin Hoyle and Wm. S. Bates were appointed by the meeting, as assistant of the meeting. Jonathan Binns was the clerk of the meeting, and that he was the only one who was present at the meeting.

to be deemed invalid because made by Jonathan Binns himself, after the Friends therein named had been proposed by a part of the representatives, and openly approved by a large portion of the meeting, with what shadow of consistency can the minute of Benjamin Hoyle be vindicated, appointing himself and another to stations for which they had not been proposed to the meeting in the present year, either by any portion of the representatives or by any one else.

After the minute of Benjamin Hoyle, continuing himself and W. S. Bates as clerks, was read, no business was transacted, until he made and read a minute of adjournment to ten o'clock on the following day. When Benjamin Hoyle and those who united with him had withdrawn, it is believed that nearly one-half of the original number remained.

From this point of time, the two bodies, into which the meeting was divided, continued to act separately, each claiming the name and character of Ohio Yearly Meeting.

It is a significant fact that the Friends who were present from other Yearly Meetings with minutes or certificates, with a single exception, remained behind when Benjamin Hoyle and his adherents withdrew. It is also understood, and not denied, that Thomas B. Gould and his companion, attended to its close, without opposition or objection, the meeting which recognized Benjamin Hoyle as clerk.

The case of the women's Yearly Meeting may justly claim a few lines in this review.

When, on third day morning, the representatives were called upon for their report, their response was, in substance, that they had no names to offer. On this the acting clerk waited, without attempting to make a minute, until a proposal was made and largely united with, that the incumbents of the former year should serve the meeting for the present one. To this proposal no objection was made, and no other names were offered. With this sanction, Jane M. Plummer made a minute expressive of the re-appointment of herself and Hannah S. Ladd to the stations of clerk and assistant for the current year.

In the afternoon, they sent in an inquiry to what hour the men's meeting was going to adjourn, and being informed that no hour had then been agreed upon, they made their adjournment to the same hour as the men. As the meeting of which Jonathan Binns

acted as clerk, adjourned to eight o'clock next morning, the other having previously adjourned to ten, the women were left to construe their own adjournment, according to their judgment, as to which body constituted the true Yearly Meeting. Accordingly, at eight o'clock next morning, Jane M. Plummer and Hannah S. Ladd took their seats at the table, and in conjunction with such women Friends as assembled, believed to amount to nearly, if not quite, half the number that had convened on the two previous days, proceeded with the business of the Yearly Meeting.

The proceedings of the Womens' Yearly Meeting appear, therefore, to have been conducted in a manner strictly constitutional and orderly.

As this meeting from that time acted in unison with the meeting of which Jonathan Binns was clerk, they were evidently identified, and must be regarded as collateral branches of one Yearly Meeting. And we may find no trivial evidence that these united bodies constitute the genuine Yearly Meeting of Ohio, in the fact that all the Friends in attendance from other Yearly Meetings, whether male or female, with certificates or minutes, with the solitary exception already mentioned, continued to meet with those for whom Jonathan Binns and Jane M. Plummer acted as clerks; and that the epistles from those bodies have been acknowledged and responded to by all the Yearly Meetings which have occurred since they were issued.

ENOCH LEWIS.

PHILADELPHIA, FIRST MONTH, 27, 1855.











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